



**BEFORE THE STATE COMMISSION
ON JUDICIAL CONDUCT**

CJC No. 19-0390

PUBLIC REPRIMAND

**HONORABLE GENA SLAUGHTER
191ST CIVIL DISTRICT COURT JUDGE
DALLAS COUNTY, TEXAS**

During its meeting on December 4-5, 2019, the State Commission on Judicial Conduct concluded a review of the allegations against the Honorable Gena Slaughter, 191st Civil District Court Judge, Dallas County, Texas. After considering the evidence before it, the Commission entered the following Findings and Conclusions:

FINDINGS OF FACT

1. At all times relevant hereto, the Honorable Gena Slaughter was Judge of the 191st Civil District Court, Dallas, Dallas County, Texas.
2. Judge Slaughter was duly-elected as judge in November 2006 and was sworn in on January 1, 2007. She was re-elected to the bench in November 2010.
3. On September 1, 2013, Judge Slaughter's Texas law license was administratively suspended by the State Bar of Texas for failing to pay her bar dues. She was reinstated on September 6, 2013.
4. Judge Slaughter was re-elected in November 2014 and was sworn in on January 1, 2015.
5. On September 1, 2015, Judge Slaughter's Texas law license was administratively suspended by the State Bar of Texas for failing to pay her bar dues. She was reinstated on September 15, 2015.
6. On September 1, 2016, Judge Slaughter's Texas law license was administratively suspended by the State Bar of Texas for failing to pay her bar dues. She was reinstated on September 22, 2016.
7. On September 1, 2017, Judge Slaughter's Texas law license was administratively suspended by the State Bar of Texas for failing to pay her bar dues. She was reinstated on November 1, 2017.

8. On September 1, 2018, Judge Slaughter's Texas law license was administratively suspended by the State Bar of Texas for failing to pay her bar dues.
9. Judge Slaughter was re-elected in November 2018 and was sworn in on January 1, 2019. She was administratively suspended from the practice of law at the time she took her oath of office.
10. On February 26, 2018, Commission Staff sent a letter of inquiry to Judge Slaughter's court regarding her repeated failure to maintain her Texas law license in good standing. She did not respond. In early April 2019, Staff contacted Judge Slaughter's court to inquire as to the status of her responses to the letter of inquiry. The following day, Staff received a phone call from Judge Slaughter's court coordinator who advised that the judge did not receive anything in the mail from the Commission. She requested that Staff send a copy of the materials to Judge Slaughter via email. Staff sent an email to Judge Slaughter at the address provided by her court coordinator on April 3, 2019. No response was received.
11. On May 31, 2019, the Commission instituted formal proceedings against Judge Slaughter, pursuant to Texas Government Code Section 33.022 and Rule 10 of the Texas Procedural Rules for the Removal or Retirement of Judges.
12. On June 24, 2019, the Commission received Judge Slaughter's Response to the Notice of Formal Proceedings. Judge Slaughter acknowledged that she had let her bar dues go unpaid. She blamed the lapses in 2013, 2015, 2016, 2017, and part of the lapse in 2018, on her decision to delegate the duty to the "treasurer of her officeholder account."
13. Judge Slaughter stated, "[u]ntil 2017, I was not aware that my dues had not been timely paid every year."
14. Judge Slaughter stated that she only became aware that her 2018 bar dues had not been paid on or about April 3, 2019, when she received an email from the Commission inquiring about her failure to respond to the February 2019 letter from the Commission. Judge Slaughter explained that she "immediately began attempting to pay [her] bar dues."
15. Judge Slaughter's bar license was not reinstated until June 26, 2019.
16. On December 6, 2019, the Formal Proceeding against Judge Slaughter was withdrawn.

RELEVANT STANDARDS

1. Canon 2A of the Texas Code of Judicial Conduct, states, in pertinent part: "A judge shall comply with the law and should act at all times in a manner that promotes public confidence in the integrity and impartiality of the judiciary."
2. Article V, Section 1-a(6)A of the Texas Constitution provides, in relevant part, that a judge can be sanctioned for "willful violation of the Code of Judicial Conduct, willful or persistent conduct that is clearly inconsistent with the proper performance of his duties or casts public discredit upon the judiciary or administration of justice."
3. Section 33.001(b) of the Texas Government Code provides, in relevant part, that, for purposes of Section 1-a, Article V of the Texas Constitution, "willful or persistent conduct that is clearly inconsistent with the proper performance of a judge's duties," includes "failure to cooperate with the commission."

4. Article V, § 7 of the Texas Constitution provides that “[e]ach district judge shall be...licensed to practice law in this State...”
5. Article III, § 3 of the Texas State Bar Rules provides that “[a]ll membership fees shall be payable at the time of enrollment as a member of the State Bar and annually thereafter on the first day of the State Bar’s fiscal year.”
6. Article III, § 5 of the Texas State Bar Rules provides that “[i]f a member is in default of payment of membership fees or any assessment levied by the Court on the thirtieth day after the due date, the clerk shall forthwith notify the member of default. If the fees and assessments are not paid on or before sixty (60) days after the mailing of the notice of default, the defaulting member shall be automatically suspended from the practice of law. Any practice of law during such suspension shall constitute professional misconduct and subject the member to discipline.”
7. Article III, § 7(A) of the Texas State Bar Rules provides that “[w]hen a member, who has been suspended for nonpayment of fees or assessments, removes such default by payment of fees or assessments then owing, plus an additional amount equivalent to one-half the delinquency, the suspension shall automatically be lifted and the member restored to former status. Return to former status shall be retroactive to inception of suspension, but shall not affect any proceeding for discipline of the member for professional misconduct.”
8. The State Bar rules have the same effect as statutes. *Cushnie v. The State Bar*, 845 S.W.3d 358, 359 (Tex. App.—Houston [1st Dist.] 1992, writ denied) citing *State Bar of Texas v. Wolfe*, 801 S.W.2d 202, 203 (Tex. App.—Houston [1st Dist.] 1990, no writ).

CONCLUSION

Based upon the record before it and the factual findings recited above, the Texas State Commission on Judicial Conduct has determined that Judge Slaughter should be publicly reprimanded for failing to maintain her Texas law license in good standing in violation of Canon 2A of the Texas Code of Judicial Conduct and Article V, §1-a(6)A of the Texas Constitution. Furthermore, the Commission finds that Judge Slaughter violated Article V, §1-a(6)A of the Texas Constitution, as defined by Section 33.001(b) of the Texas Government Code, by failing to cooperate with the Commission. The Commission has taken this action pursuant to the authority contained in Article V, §1-a(8) of the Texas Constitution, in a continuing effort to promote public confidence in and high standards for the judiciary.

Issued this the 7th day of February, 2020.



David Hall
Chairman, State Commission on Judicial Conduct